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## NOTES AND SUGGESTIONS

### AN UNRECOGNIZED FATHER MARQUETTE LETTER

THE Latin letter printed below is from the Duke of Portland's manuscripts at Welbeck Abbey and was printed in translation in 1893 by the Historical Manuscripts Commission.<sup>1</sup> The present transcript has been made by the librarian at Welbeck Abbey, who writes: "The document is in a perfectly clear handwriting. The endorsement is in another hand which is also clear."<sup>2</sup> There is, therefore, no doubt about the reading of the letter, the signature, of which a tracing was made, being unmistakable.

In cujusunque manus hae literae venerint  
Salutem in Domino

Cum miserâ obedientia nullus fuerim, quae rebam alios qualescunque ad Christum Salvatorem nostrum adducere, forte accedit quod, ut captus ex Spiritualium impetu, hos barbaros quorum familiarem esse credo cum Europaeis consuetudinem, offenderem: Verum cum ab ipsis nihil intelligerem, gratissimum mihi fuerit, si qui sitis, quae urbis vestrae latitudo, et longitudo, qui sint hi barbari, me feceritis certiore; Interim hoc a me accipite, ad Societatem Jesu vocavit me Dominus, vultque ut in Canadensi regione propter barbaros (quos sanguinè suo redemit) vitam peragam, unde certum est mihi, si immaculata virgo, Dei mater, mihi adfuerit in hisce locis, licet miserimis, vitae spiritum reddere, cum pro nobis Xtus tanta tulerit tormenta, non sane voluit ut ei quam nobis conservat parceremus, qua dum fruimur, Deum Oremus ut (si nunquam in terris) in coelo nos conjungat.

Dat. ad Fluvium Convectionis ad altitudinem Poli 35 <sup>d</sup> ad Longitud. forte 275 <sup>d</sup> 4th August 1675.	Servus in christo jesu et immacu- lata Virgine JACOBUS MACPUT, Societ. jesu
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[Endorsed:]

Copy of latin letter receiv'd by Coll. Bird in Virginia in the winter 1675 from a Jesuit dated 4th August 1675 in latitude 35 degr. longitude 275 abo<sup>t</sup> 1200 mile West 2 degr. Southw<sup>ds</sup> from Virginia.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Thirteenth Report*, app., pt. II., p. 36. My attention was first called to this letter by my colleague, Dr. Theodore C. Pease.

<sup>2</sup> Richard W. Goulding to B. F. Stevens and Brown, Welbeck Abbey, February 15, 1920. He adds: "Whoever may have added it [the endorsement] paid no attention to the word *forte* which appears after *Longitud.* in the text".

<sup>3</sup> The translation as published by the Historical Manuscripts Commission is as follows, slightly corrected:

"JAMES MACPUT of the Society of Jesus to ——. 1675, August 4. 'Ad Fluvium Convectionis.'—I who by obedience am nobody, was trying to bring

In the following discussion it must be first kept in mind that we have here not the original but a copy made supposedly by "Colonel" William Byrd. There is nothing in either the form or the character of the letter to arouse a suspicion of forgery. Had some Virginian desired to excite the government by fear of French aggression to an energetic promotion of western discoveries, a more specific account of the explorations of the rivals would have been devised.

If the above is a copy of a genuine letter, who was the writer? The answer seems evident, provided a reasonable allowance is made for the errors committed by the first or some later transcriber. The name *Jacobus Macput* is easily read *Jacobus Marquette*, for nothing would be easier than to mistake the "rque" for the "cpu"; and there would be no doubt of the correction, were it not for the date, August 4, 1675; Marquette died on May 18 of that year.<sup>4</sup> In this case, however, the transcriber's error is intelligible to anyone who has attempted to determine whether a figure in a manuscript is a 3 or a 5. The correct date is undoubtedly August 4, 1673. The transcriber made also a mistake in the name of the place where the letter was written; it should be "*Ad Fluvium Conceptionis*" instead of "*Convectionis*". In passing it may be noticed that in August, 1673, Marquette was the only man in the world calling the Mississippi River by the name "*Conception*"; also significant is the reference in the letter to the "*immaculate Virgin*".

If these so reasonable emendations give to the letter a time and place that correspond to the movements of Marquette himself, there can be little doubt about the identity of the writer. In his famous

others to Christ our Saviour, and it chanced that being seized by the force of the Spirit I fell in with these barbarians who I believe are accustomed to have intercourse with Europeans. As however I can get no information from them, I should be most grateful if you, whoever you are, and whatever may be your latitude and longitude, would inform me what these barbarians are [more properly, "if you would inform me who you are, what the latitude and longitude of your town, and who these barbarians are"]. In the meantime, receive thus much from me. The Lord called me to the Society of Jesus, and it is his will that I should spend my life in the Canadian territory for the sake of these barbarians whom he redeemed with his blood. Wherefore I am certain that if the immaculate Virgin the mother of God were present to me in these wretched lands, she would not wish us [since Christ bore for us so great torments] to spare the breath of life which she [he] preserves for us. Which whilst we enjoy, let us pray God that if we may not meet on earth we may be joined in heaven. *Latin.*

"*Copy. Endorsed: 'Copy of a Latin letter received by Colonel Bird in Virginia in the winter 1675, from a Jesuit, dated 4th August 1675, in latitude 33 degrees, longitude 275. About 1200 miles west, two degrees south-west [southwards] from Virginia.'*"

<sup>4</sup> Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, LIX. 315, note 46.

voyage down the Mississippi with Louis Jolliet, Father Marquette reached latitude  $33^{\circ} 40'$  and on July 17, 1673, started from that point the return journey.<sup>5</sup> As did many travellers in succeeding years, Jolliet and his companion found that the ascent of the Mississippi was laborious. The period was summer, when the waters were confined to the river bed and therefore made the work of propulsion harder. Unfortunately Marquette's account of the voyage is sketchy and Jolliet's journal, which must have contained daily entries, has been lost, so that their progress cannot be followed; but taking into consideration the current, the sinuosity of the river, and the experience of other travellers, it is very probable that they were on August 4 at about the thirty-fifth parallel, where the letter was written. This point lies a few miles south of Memphis.

At this place on their voyage down they had visited a village of Indians strange to them. Marquette's narrative of the experience is as follows:

While drifting down with The current, in this condition, we perceived on land some savages armed with guns, who awaited us. I at once offered them my plumed calumet, while our frenchmen prepared for defense, but delayed firing, that The savages might be the first to discharge their guns. I spoke to them in huron, but they answered me by a word which seemed to me a declaration of war against us. However, they were as frightened as we were; and what we took for a signal for battle was an Invitation that they gave us to draw near, that they might give us food. We therefore landed, and entered their Cabins, where they offered us meat from wild cattle and bear's grease, with white plums, which are very good. They have guns, hatchets, hoes, Knives, beads, and flasks of double glass, in which they put Their powder. They wear Their hair long, and tattoo their bodies after the hiroquois fashion. The women wear head-dresses and garments like those of the huron women. They assured us that we were no more than ten days' journey from The sea; that they bought cloth and all other goods from the Europeans who lived to The east; that these Europeans had rosaries and pictures; that they played upon Instruments; that some of them looked Like me, and had been received by these savages kindly. Nevertheless, I saw none who seemed to have received any instruction in the faith; I gave Them as much as I could, with some medals.<sup>6</sup>

The Quapaw gave the explorers some further information about these unknown: "They also told us", writes Marquette, "that the savages with guns whom we had met were Their Enemies who barred Their way to the sea, and prevented Them from becoming acquainted with the Europeans, and from carrying on any trade with them."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Marquette's journal, Thwaites, LIX. 159, 161.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, LIX. 147, 149.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, LIX. 155.

The identification of these Indians is made more complicated by the various maps that resulted from Jolliet's discovery of the Mississippi. Those derived from Marquette's account place at this site and at a position farther south a tribe called "Monsoupehia", which the *Handbook of American Indians* describes as "a problematic tribe first noted on Marquette's map".<sup>8</sup> Jolliet's map gives the situation of the tribe on the east bank south of the mouth of the Arkansas River. The scattered references of later date to this "problematic" tribe may have all been derived from this original source and need not be given much weight in the identification of the Indians met by the original explorers.

According to the account the Indians were occupying "cabins", their habitat extended along the eastern bank of the lower Mississippi, and they spoke a language unfamiliar to Father Marquette who knew six Indian languages, Algonquian and Iroquoian. Their habitat was thus identical with that of the Chickasaw, and if they did not belong to that tribe, they were undoubtedly members of some one of the Muskogean group.

When Father Marquette landed at a village of these same Indians on this return voyage, on August 4, 1673, he evidently gave into their hands this Latin letter in which he begs the white strangers to tell him "who these barbarians are", since he has been able to "learn nothing from them". His expectation was that the Indians would carry the letter to the Spaniards with whom they traded.

Unquestionably the Indians had bought their guns and other utensils from the Spaniards in Florida. That the letter did not reach that settlement but found its destination two and a half years later in the hands of William Byrd of Virginia is an interesting historical fact needing some explanation. In 1673, the year of Jolliet's success, Colonel Abraham Wood had through his agent, James Needham, extended his trading relations with the western Indians beyond the mountains, and Needham actually visited the Cherokee.<sup>9</sup> From that time the Virginia traders appear to have followed up this trade, except when prevented by war, either by sending pack trains to the westward or by selling to Indians who visited the settlements. It was probably from some western visitor that Byrd, a well-known Indian

<sup>8</sup> See Jolliet's map, *ibid.*, LIX. 87, and the maps derived from Marquette's information in Kellogg, "Marquette's Authentic Map possibly Identified", *Proceedings of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin*, pp. 183 ff.; *Handbook of American Indians*, art. "Monsopelia".

<sup>9</sup> Alvord and Bidgood, *First Explorations of the Trans-Allegheny Region by the Virginians, 1650-1674*, p. 79 ff.

trader, received this letter two years after the explorations of James Needham.

The endorsement, which is in a handwriting different from the body of the letter, was not made in 1675, for William Byrd was at that time only captain; he is called colonel for the first time in 1680.<sup>10</sup> A guess as to the manner of the entry of this letter into the manuscripts of the Duke of Portland may be hazarded. William Penn, the founder of Pennsylvania, a diligent collector of information about western America, was correspondent of Robert Harley, a member of the family whose manuscripts are preserved at Welbeck Abbey. Colonel Byrd probably sent a copy to William Penn who passed it on to his correspondent.

CLARENCE WALWORTH ALVORD.

#### AMERICAN MIDDLE TEMPLARS

THE claim that "the Society of the Middle Temple took a leading part in the birth of the American nation"<sup>1</sup> through the number of members who were concerned in the settlement of Virginia has received general recognition. Toward the end of the seventeenth century began a reciprocal movement of young Americans returning to study at the Middle Temple. It has been estimated that "Probably from twenty-five to fifty American-born lawyers had been educated in England prior to 1760";<sup>2</sup> and it has been stated that 115 Americans were admitted to the Inns from 1760 to the close of the Revolution. Before the year 1760 the description of the parentage of seventy students upon the books of the Middle Temple shows that they had come across the seas. Although the Middle Templars formed the majority of those who entered at the Inns, the names of a few Americans may be found at the other Inns of Court. One hundred and fifty joined the Middle Temple and the stream of Americans reached its height in the middle of the eighteenth century. Of that period there is an admirable record in a volume known as *Master Worsley's Book*<sup>3</sup> prepared under the direction of the treasurer, "the principal and supreme officer", of that name. The

<sup>10</sup> Bassett, *The Writings of Colonel William Byrd of Westover in Virginia Esqr.*, p. xix. Captain in 1677, *Journals of the House of Burgesses*, 1659-1693, p. 84.

<sup>1</sup> C. E. A. Bedwell, *Brief History of the Middle Temple*, pp. 32-50, where some of the evidence in support is collected.

<sup>2</sup> C. Warren, *History of the American Bar*, p. 188, referring to C. J. Stillé, *Life and Times of John Dickinson*.

<sup>3</sup> *Master Worsley's Book on the History and Constitution of the Honourable Society of the Middle Temple*, ed. A. R. Ingpen (London, 1910).